

Message Text

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64

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NIC-01 MC-02 AID-20 DRC-01 /172 W

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R 161600Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4769

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12181

DEPT PASS CAIRO

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: UR XF MARR

SUBJECT: SOVIET ROLE IN ME CONFLICT

1. LOCAL PRESS ON OCT 16 REPORTS THAT SOV AMBASSADOR AZIMOV TOLD MEETING OF LEBANESE POLITICIANS ON OCT 14 THAT USSR SUPPLYING SYRIA WITH "ENTIRELY NEW, SOPHISTICATED ARMS" WHICH WOULD ENABLE SYRIA TO PUSH IDF BACK, NOT MERELY HOLD ITS GROUND. ALTHOUGH AZIMOV LATER HAD SOV EMBASSY ISSUE OFFICIAL DENIAL, WE ARE TOLD BY PERSONS PRESENT THAT HE HAD IN FACT MADE SUCH STATEMENT.

2. SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF LOCAL DAILY L'ORIENT-LE-JOUR KPILED SIMILAR STORY FROM DAMASCUS WHICH APPEARED OCT 16. STORY QUOTES "WELL-INFORMED SOURCES IN DAMASCUS" AS
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SAYING THAT ISRAEL WOULD NEVER BE ABLE REGAIN ITS

MILITARY SUPERIORITY OVER SYRIA AND EGYPT BECAUSE LATTER HAVE "NEW ARMS WHICH WILL BE USED ONLY AT PROPER TIME." THESE ARMS WILL "ENABLE ARAB ARMIES DESTROY FOREVER MUCH OF ISRAELI INVINCIBILITY."

3. BOTH STORY FROM DAMASCUS AND REPORT ON AZIMOV GO ON TO TALK ABOUT SUPERIORITY OF SOVIET-MADE SAM 6 MISSILES USED AGAINST AMERICAN-MADE AIRCRAFT. AZIMOV IS REPORTED TO HAVE CRITICIZED GOL FOR HAVING TURNED DOWN EARLIER OFFER FROM USSR TO

SUPPLY IT WITH SUCH MISSILES, POINTING OUT THAT WITH SAM'S LEBANON COULD PREVENT IDF FROM FLYING ACROSS ITS TERRITORY TO ATTACK SYRIA FROM REAR. HE REITERATED USSR WILLINGNESS SUPPLY SAM'S AND OTHER ARMS, AND EXPRESSED ASSURANCE THAT GOL LEADERS "WILL TAKE RIGHT DECISIONS FOR DEFENSE OF COUNTRY." SOV EMBASSY ISSUED NO DENIAL ON THIS PART OF AZIMOV REMARKS.

4. COMMENT: WHILE IT UNCLEAR TO WHAT, IF ANY, SPECIFIC WEAPONS AZIMOV REFERRING (SEE DIA SITREP 42) IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT USSR, SYRIAN AND EGYPT ALL SPREADING IDEA OF SOME MYSTERIOUS NEW WEAPON. THIS MAY BE AT LEAST PARTIALLY A FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE. AZIMOV'S REMARKS ABOUT SOV WEAPONS FOR LEBANON ARE STANDARD FARE, SINCE HE HAS OFFERRED (UNSUCCESSFULLY) MILITARY SUPPORT TO COL ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. HOWEVER, AS PRIME MINISTER TOLD AMBASSADOR (SEPTEL), THIS LINE INCREASINGLY SEDUCTIVE AS RESULT ENHANCED REPUTATION SOVIET WEAPONRY. BUFFUM

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